

Docket No.: 614.1989

Serial No. 09/356,445

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1-11, 15-17, 19-23, 25, and 27-30 in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
 image generating means for generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, which are respectively each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and
 display means for displaying said sequential character image.

2. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating apparatus, ~~as claimed in claim 1, which further comprises~~ comprising:
an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups, each defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate a respective, individual communication information to a viewer;
a display part configured to display said sequential character image; and
a storage means for storing ~~part storing~~ a plurality of said unit image groups,
 said storage means ~~part storing~~ a plurality of kinds of unit image groups having mutually different starting reference images and ending reference images with respect to a same communication information, and
 said image generating ~~means~~ part reading a leading unit image group and a trailing image group which has a starting reference image approximately matching an ending reference image of the leading unit image group from said storage means and connecting the leading and trailing unit image groups.

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3. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a sequential character image, said program comprising:

an image generating means-for-procedure causing the computer to generate a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups ~~which are respectively,~~ each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined in advance and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and

a display means-for-procedure causing the computer to display said sequential character image.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus which generates a motion picture, comprising:

a database ~~storing-configured to store~~ unit component images, ~~respectively each~~ representing a respective series of actions, ~~each of said unit component images being defined~~ and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being made up of a plurality of images including a starting image and an ending image of an action of a character;

a data retrieving part configured to selectively searching and reading search and read the unit component images stored in said database; and

a connecting part ~~connecting-configured to connect~~ an end image of a first unit component image read by said data retrieving part and a starting image of a second unit component image read by said data retrieving part.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus for generating a motion picture, comprising:

a database ~~storing-configured to store~~ unit image groups respectively representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer by the action represented thereby;

a retrieving part reading-configured to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from said database, based on the input attribute information; and

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an editing means for editing part configured to edit the unit image group read by said retrieving part.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a data retrieving part-procedure causing the computer to selectively search and read unit component images stored in a database which stores unit component images ~~respectively~~ representing a respective series of actions, each of said unit component images being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer and being made up of a plurality of images including a starting image and an ending image of an action of a character; and

a connecting part-procedure causing the computer to connect an end image of a first unit component image which is caused to be read by said data retrieving part-procedure and a starting image of a second unit component image which is caused to be read by said data retrieving part-procedure.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a retrieving part-procedure causing the computer to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from a database, based on the input attribute information, said database storing unit image groups ~~respectively~~-representing an-respective actions of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer by the respective action represented thereby; and

an editing means for procedure causing the computer to edit the unit image group caused to read by said retrieving part-procedure.

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8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus comprising:
an image generating part means for generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which are respectively, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby;

a display part means for displaying the sequential character image; and
a control means for controlling configured to display a device depending on a motion of the sequential character image.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
a sequence generating part means for part generating an operation sequence by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of a character image generated by said image generating apparatus, by treating the character image in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs,
 each of said significance spaces being defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said sequence generating ~~means part includes means for calling calls a~~ corresponding data file by searching a database based on a retrieval key specified by each method.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing a computer to generate an operation sequence, said program comprising:
a sequence generating means for procedure causing the computer to generate an operation sequence by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of a character image, by treating the character image in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs, each of said significance spaces being defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

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12. (ORIGINAL) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 11, wherein each of said significance spaces further includes at least one of a method corresponding to audio reproduction, a method corresponding to a cooperation process of the character display and the audio reproduction, and a method corresponding to a background image.

13. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A database, comprising:
a character image stored in units of significance spaces corresponding to one picture scene from a point in time when a switching of one picture of the character image occurs to a point in time when a next switching of one picture occurs, and
each of said significance spaces is defined as an object at least including a method corresponding to a character display and a method corresponding to a user input and/or output.

14. (ORIGINAL) The database as claimed in claim 13, wherein an operation sequence is generated by connecting a plurality of picture scenes of the character image, and data files of the character image stored in the database are searched based on retrieval keys specified by each of methods.

15. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating method to generate a motion picture, comprising:
defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;
generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the, each of the plurality of unit image groups being made up of a plurality of sequential images, being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer, and being specified by attribute information corresponding to the one communication information indicated thereby; and
displaying said sequential character image.

16. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating method as claimed in claim 15, which further comprises to generate a motion picture, comprising:
defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

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generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer;

displaying said sequential character image;

storing a plurality of said unit image groups;

storing a plurality of kinds of unit image groups having mutually different starting reference images and ending reference images with respect to a same communication information; and

reading a leading unit image group and a trailing unit image group which has a starting reference image approximately matching an ending reference image of the leading unit image group from said storage means and connecting the leading and trailing unit image groups.

17. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) An image generating apparatus, comprising:
an image generator generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups ~~which, respectively, represent~~ representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of sequential images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of the plurality of unit image groups are being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer by the action represented thereby; and
a display part displaying said sequential character image.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the plurality of said unit image groups are made up of humanoid images.

19. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 3, wherein the plurality of said unit image groups are made up of humanoid images.

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The image generating apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising:

a cooperation unit adjusting a reproducing time of image data when the reproducing time of the image data and a reproducing time of audio data do not match, such that the adjusted reproducing time of image data matches the reproducing time of audio data.

21. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating method as claimed in claim 45, further comprising to generate a motion picture, comprising:
defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the

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communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups
which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer;

displaying said sequential character image; and

adjusting a reproducing time of image data when the reproducing time of the image data
 and a reproducing time of audio data do not match, such that the adjusted reproducing time of
 image data matches the reproducing time of audio data.

22. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating apparatus as claimed in
 claim 1, comprising:

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a
plurality of unit image groups, which are respectively defined and guaranteed in advance to
indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display part displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image
 substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

23. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ A computer-readable storage medium as
 claimed in claim 3, which stores a program causing a computer to generate a sequential
character image, said program comprising:

an image generating procedure causing the computer to generate a sequential character
image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which are respectively defined and
guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display procedure causing the computer to display said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image
 substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

24. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The image generating apparatus as claimed in
 claim 4, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image
 substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

25. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating apparatus as claimed in
 claim 5, for generating a motion picture, comprising:

a database storing unit image groups, each representing a respective action of a

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character and made up of a plurality of images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer;

a retrieving part reading a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from said database, based on the input attribute information; and

an editing part editing the unit image group read by said retrieving part,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

26. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

27. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ A computer-readable storage medium as claimed in claim 7, which stores a program for causing a computer to generate a motion picture, said program comprising:

a retrieving procedure causing the computer to read a unit image group corresponding to input attribute information from a database, based on the input attribute information, said database storing unit image groups respectively representing an action of a character and made up of a plurality of images, in correspondence with attribute information defining each action, each of said unit image groups being defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

an editing procedure causing the computer to edit the unit image group caused to read by said retrieving part,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

28. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating apparatus, ~~as claimed in claim 8, comprising:~~

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which are respectively defined and guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer;

a display part displaying the sequential character image; and

a control part controlling a device depending on a motion of the sequential character

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image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating method as ~~claimed in claim 15,~~ to generate a motion picture, comprising:

defining communication information, which guarantees in advance to indicate the communication information to a viewer;

generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, indicate the communication information to a viewer; and
displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) ~~The~~ An image generating apparatus as ~~claimed in claim 17,~~ comprising:

an image generating part generating a sequential character image by connecting a plurality of unit image groups which, respectively, represent an action and the plurality of unit image groups are guaranteed in advance to indicate one communication information to a viewer; and

a display part displaying said sequential character image,

wherein at least one of the plurality of unit image groups has a respective starting image substantially identical to a respective trailing image.